

# Session 2



## React in Time to Heart Attack Signs

### Objectives

**By the end of this session, participants will learn:**

- What a heart attack is and how to recognize its warning signs (symptoms)
- The importance of seeking treatment quickly if someone has symptoms
- Why people may delay calling 9-1-1
- The benefits of calling 9-1-1
- How to plan ahead

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### Materials and Supplies

**To conduct this session, you'll need:**

- *With Every Heartbeat Is Life* manual and picture cards
- Blackboard and chalk, dry erase board, or several large pieces of paper, a marker, and tape

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### Handouts

**Give each participant these handouts during this session:**

- Fast Action Saves Lives (page 2.17)
- Learn What a Heart Attack Feels Like (page 2.18)
- Fast Action Saves Lives: Role Plays (pages 2.19-2.20)
- My Emergency Card (page 2.21)

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### Before This Session

*(Optional)*

Arrange for a health professional to come to the session to discuss cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

## **Session Outline**

### **Introducing the Session**

1. Welcome
2. Review of Last Week's Session
3. About This Session

### **Conducting the Session**

1. The Facts Don't Lie
2. What Is a Heart Attack?
3. Get Rapid Treatment for a Heart Attack: Delay Can Be Deadly
4. What Are the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack?
5. What To Do After Calling 9-1-1
6. The Role of Emergency Medical Services
7. How To Plan Ahead

### **Review of Today's Key Points**

### **Weekly Pledge**

### **Closing**

# Introducing the Session

## 1. Welcome

**DO**      **Welcome** participants to the session.

## 2. Review of Last Week's Session

**SAY**      At the last session, we talked about the risk factors for heart disease. Who remembers the risk factors we can control?

### NOTE



Allow 2 or 3 minutes for participants to respond.

**DO**      **Add** the following if participants don't mention them:

- Diabetes
- Heavy drinking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Physical inactivity
- Not getting enough sleep
- Sleep apnea
- Overweight
- Smoking
- Stress

**ASK** Would any of you like to share what you're doing or plan to do to improve your heart health?

**NOTE**



Allow about 2 minutes for participants to respond.

**ASK** Has anyone completed the family health history?

**NOTE**



(Optional) **Give** a prize to participants who have completed the family health history.

**ASK** Does anyone want to share what you've learned about your family health history?

**NOTE**



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond.

### 3. About This Session

**SAY** If you have symptoms of a heart attack, the sooner you get help, the better. Heart attacks can seriously damage the heart and can even be fatal. That's why it's important to know the warning signs of a heart attack and what to do if you or someone near you has symptoms.

**SAY** Charles W. Chestnutt, an African American writer from the late 1800s and early 1900s, said, "There's time enough, but none to spare."

**ASK** What does this quote mean to you?

**NOTE**



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond.

**SAY** In today's session, we'll talk about the warning signs of a heart attack and the importance of acting quickly if you or someone else has warning signs. By the end of this session, you'll also know:

- Some basics about how the heart functions
- What a heart attack is
- Why people may delay getting help for a heart attack
- The benefits of calling 9-1-1
- Steps you can take now to help you survive a heart attack
- How to prepare your emergency card

# Conducting the Session

## 1. The Facts Don't Lie

**SAY** In the United States, someone has a heart attack every 40 seconds.

Of those who die, about half do so within an hour of their first symptoms and before they reach the hospital.

African Americans are at higher risk of having a heart attack than other groups.

## 2. What Is a Heart Attack?

**SAY** Let's talk more about what a heart attack is.

**DO** **Show** picture card 2.1.



**SAY** Normally blood flows freely through arteries, carrying oxygen to your heart. When a blockage stops the blood from getting to your heart, you have a heart attack. Here's how that can happen:

- Certain risk factors for heart disease—like smoking—can damage blood vessels.
- Plaque, a waxy substance, may build up where your arteries are damaged, reducing the flow of blood to your heart.
- A blood clot may form on the plaque, blocking the arteries and closing off blood flow. This causes a heart attack.
- If you don't get treatment to restore blood flow quickly, heart muscle begins to die.

**It's important to call 9-1-1 at the first symptoms of a heart attack.**

**ASK** Are there any questions about how heart attacks happen?

### NOTE



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond.

### 3. Get Rapid Treatment for a Heart Attack — Delay Can Be Deadly

**SAY** Treatments for a heart attack have improved over the years.  
Now we have treatments that open up blood vessels and restore blood flow.

**DO** **Show** picture card 2.2.



**SAY** “Clot-busting” drugs dissolve the blood clots that block arteries. But you must get the drugs as soon as possible—within a few hours after symptoms start.

There’s also a treatment called angioplasty. To restore blood flow, doctors place a type of balloon in your blocked artery to open it up.

With angioplasty, you may also get a stent, a wire mesh tube that stays in the artery to keep it open.

**SAY** People, particularly African Americans, often wait too long before they seek medical help for the warning signs of a heart attack.

If you think that you or someone else has symptoms of a heart attack, don’t ignore it or feel embarrassed to get help. Call 9-1-1 for emergency medical care. Acting fast saves lives.

**DO** **Give** each participant the “Fast Action Saves Lives” handout (page 2.17).



**SAY** Let’s go over how to act fast when someone has heart attack symptoms.

#### NOTE



**Ask** a volunteer to read the handout out loud.

**ASK** What might prevent you, your family, or your friends from calling 9-1-1 right away?

## NOTE



Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond. **Write** their answers on the blackboard, dry erase board, or large piece of paper taped to the wall.

## DO

**Add** the following reasons if participants don't mention them.

They may think that:

- Their symptoms aren't bad enough.
- Having a friend drive you is faster than going by ambulance.
- Emergency personnel won't respond fast enough.
- Having an ambulance show up at home or work is embarrassing, especially if it's a false alarm.
- An ambulance and medical care are too expensive.

## SAY

**Don't drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. Call an ambulance! Medical personnel can begin lifesaving treatment on the way to the emergency room.**

## SAY

It's easy to talk about what to do when a heart attack happens. It's harder to take those actions during an emergency. So let's act out different scenarios to prepare for a real situation.

## NOTE



**Ask** participants to form teams of three or four. **Give** each team one of the three different role plays in the "Fast Action Saves Lives: Role Plays" handout (pages 2.19-2.20).



## NOTE



**Ask** the teams to take a few minutes to read the role play and **decide** who will play which characters. Then **ask** each team to present their "drama" to the group.

## SAY

Thanks for volunteering. Remember: Calling 9-1-1 is the most important thing to do when you or someone else has symptoms of a heart attack. It's like bringing the hospital emergency department to your door.



## 4. What Are the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack?

**ASK** What warning signs would make you think someone is having a heart attack?

**NOTE**



**Write** participants' responses on the blackboard, dry erase board, or large piece of paper taped to the wall.

**DO** **Give** each participant the “Learn What a Heart Attack Feels Like” handout (page 2.18).



**DO** **Show** picture card 2.3 and review the handout.



**SAY** Common warning signs of a heart attack are:

- Chest pain or an uncomfortable feeling of pressure, squeezing, or fullness that lasts more than a few minutes. It may even feel like heartburn or indigestion.
- Discomfort in one or both arms or shoulders, or in your neck, jaw, back, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. It may be your only symptom!

Other symptoms include:

- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Light-headedness or sudden dizziness
- Nausea or feeling sick to your stomach
- Feeling unusually tired for no reason, sometimes for days (especially if you're a woman)

**SAY**

The most common warning sign of a heart attack is chest pain or discomfort. However, some people have no chest pain.

Not all heart attacks happen the way you see them on TV or in the movies—where a person grabs their chest and falls to the floor.

- The symptoms of a heart attack are different for everyone.
- Symptoms of a heart attack can happen suddenly or develop slowly—over hours, days, or weeks.
- Some people have so few symptoms they don't know they're having a heart attack.

**ASK**

Why do you think someone might not realize they're having a heart attack?

**NOTE**

Allow about 5 minutes for participants to respond.

**Add** the following reasons if they aren't mentioned:

- You may confuse heart attack symptoms with other conditions, such as indigestion.
- Some people don't have symptoms at all. Heart attacks that occur without any symptoms or with very mild symptoms are called silent heart attacks.
- If you don't believe you're at risk for having a heart attack, it's easy to ignore the warning signs or wait to see if they get worse.

## 5. What To Do After Calling 9-1-1

**SAY**

If you think someone is having a heart attack:

- Have the person sit down, rest, and try to keep calm.
- Loosen any tight clothing.

**DON'T**

- Don't leave them alone except to call for help, if necessary.
- Don't allow them to deny the symptoms and convince you not to call for emergency help.
- Don't wait to see if the symptoms go away.
- Don't give the person anything by mouth unless they have a prescribed heart medicine (such as nitroglycerin).

## 6. The Role of Emergency Medical Services

**SAY**

Our actors did a great job of showing us why it's important to call 9-1-1 right away.

**ASK**

What are the benefits of calling 9-1-1?

**NOTE**

Allow 3 minutes for participants to respond.

**Add** these answers if they don't mention them:

- Emergency personnel can arrive quickly and begin diagnosis and treatment even before you get to the hospital.
- On the way to the hospital, emergency personnel tell hospital staff to prepare for your arrival. That saves valuable time. Arriving by ambulance gets you faster treatment.
- Your heart may stop beating during a heart attack. Emergency personnel carry equipment to restart your heart if that happens.

## NOTE



Most communities have the 9-1-1 system. However, if your community doesn't, **say**:

The best way to get the care you need is to call the local emergency medical number. In our community, that number is \_\_\_\_\_.

## SAY

Emergency medical personnel or hospital staff will usually ask for an emergency contact person. Plan now: Who will care for your family or pets in an emergency?

*(Optional)*

If you have arranged for a health professional to come to the session to discuss cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR): Ask the health professional to now discuss CPR (the benefits of CPR, what Bystander CPR is, where you can learn how to perform CPR, etc.) with participants.

## 7. How To Plan Ahead

## DO

**Show** picture card 2.4.



PICTURE

## SAY

Talk to your family and friends about the warning signs of a heart attack and the importance of calling 9-1-1 right away. Share what you've learned today with them, so they're prepared also.

## DO

**Show** picture card 2.5.



PICTURE

## SAY

You should also talk to your health care provider about your risk of a heart attack and how to lower it. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

## DO

**Show** picture card 2.6, and **give** each participant the "My Emergency Card" handout (page 2.21).



PICTURE



HANDOUT

**SAY**

Prepare an emergency card with the following information, and keep it in your wallet:

- Name, relationship, and phone number of people to call if you have to go to the hospital
- Emergency numbers in your area
- Name and phone number of your doctor or clinic
- Your health problems
- Medicine you take
- Allergies you have
- Any other important information

Give copies of a blank wallet card to all the adults in your family to fill out and carry.

**NOTE**

Allow 5 minutes for participants to complete the card.

**ASK**

How will you make sure that your close family and friends know what to do in case of a heart attack and why it's important to have a plan of action?

**NOTE**

Allow 2 or 3 minutes for participants to respond.

**More Information****Aspirin: Take With Caution**

If you're thinking about taking aspirin to prevent heart problems, talk to your health care provider first. The provider can determine if you should take it and at what dose.

## Review of Today's Key Points

**SAY** Let's review the main points we learned today.

### **What is a heart attack?**

- A heart attack occurs usually because a clot blocks blood flow to the heart.
- When the blood flow stops, parts of the heart muscle start to die.

### **Why is it important to get treatment quickly?**

- Quick action and medical treatment can prevent the heart muscle from dying, and that can save lives.
- Heart attack patients need clot-busting drugs as soon as possible, within a few hours after symptoms start.
- Angioplasty opens the artery and restores blood flow.

### **What are the warning signs of a heart attack?**

- Your chest may hurt or feel squeezed.
- One or both of your arms, your back, or your stomach may hurt.
- You may feel pain in your neck or jaw.
- You may feel like you can't breathe.
- You may feel light-headed or break out in a cold sweat.
- You may feel sick to your stomach.
- You may feel unusually tired for no reason, sometimes for days (especially if you're a woman).

### **What should you do if you have these warning signs?**

- Call 9-1-1, even if you aren't sure you're having a heart attack. Emergency personnel can provide treatment as soon as they arrive. It's like bringing the hospital emergency department to your door.
- Don't drive yourself to the hospital.

## Weekly Pledge



**SAY** Our quote today is: “There’s time enough, but none to spare.” This is especially true if you or your family members have warning signs of a heart attack.

**SAY** How can you practice what you’ve learned? Please think of one change you can make. This will be your pledge for the week.

**SAY** Be specific about **what** you’ll do, **how** you’ll do it, and **when** you’ll start or complete it. Here are some examples:

- Within the next week, I’ll think about what to do if I or someone near me has a heart attack at home, at work, or in the middle of the night.
- I’ll talk with family and friends within the next week about the heart attack warning signs and calling 9-1-1 right away.
- I’ll make an appointment within the next month to talk to my health care provider about my heart attack risk.

### NOTE



Allow 5 minutes for participants to think of a pledge.

**SAY** Would anyone like to share your pledge with the group?

### NOTE



**Write** down pledge ideas on the blackboard, dry erase board, or large piece of paper taped to the wall.

**SAY** (*Optional*)

Let’s talk for a moment about personal values. A personal value is a quality that’s important to you. Personal values can help you make changes in your everyday life to improve your health.

**SAY** Today, the value is serenity. Serenity helps you stay calm, even when you face problems or worries. It helps you manage stress and protect your heart health.

How can serenity, or another personal value, help you keep your pledge?

**NOTE**

Allow 3 minutes for participants to share their ideas.

**SAY** We'll talk about how you did with your pledge at the next session.

## Closing

**SAY** Thank you for coming today. What did you think of today's session?

**NOTE**

Allow a moment for participants to respond.

**SAY** The next session is about physical activity. Please wear comfortable clothing and walking shoes.

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**SAY** Please continue to work on your family health history.

**NOTE**

**Think** about today's class. What worked? What didn't work? Have you made any changes in your own life that we covered in today's session?





## Fast Action Saves Lives

### You May Not Be Sure It's a Heart Attack.

A heart attack is **not** always sudden or very painful. You may not be sure what's wrong—but if you think you're having a heart attack, act fast.

### ACT FAST. CALL 9-1-1.



### To Help Yourself Survive a Heart Attack, Take These Steps:

- ☐ Learn the warning signs of a heart attack, and act fast if you have them.
- ☐ Talk with family and friends about the warning signs and calling 9-1-1 right away.
- ☐ Ask your health care provider about what you can do to lower your risk for a heart attack.
- ☐ Complete the “My Emergency Card” handout (page 2.21).



## Learn What a Heart Attack Feels Like

**Act fast. Call 9-1-1. It could save your life.**

Clot-busting medicines and other treatments can stop a heart attack as it's happening. If you think you or someone else is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 right away.

### Know the heart attack warning signs:

Your **chest** may hurt or feel squeezed.



You may feel discomfort in one or both **arms**, or your back or stomach.



You may feel discomfort in your **neck**, shoulders, or jaw.



You may feel like you **can't breathe**.



You may feel **light-headed** or dizzy, or break out in a cold sweat.



You may feel sick to your **stomach**.





# Fast Action Saves Lives: Role Plays

## Role Play 1: At Home

Two people are at home having breakfast.

### Actor 1

I don't feel well! I woke up feeling bad. I have pressure in my chest and I'm light-headed. It's hard to catch my breath. Plus my arm hurts.

### Actor 2

You don't look well. I just learned about the signs of a heart attack and I'm worried you're having one! Let's call 9-1-1.

### Actor 1

It's probably nothing. It's probably just indigestion. It'll pass.

### Actor 2

You need to get checked out. If it's a heart attack, fast treatment can stop the heart attack and prevent serious damage to your heart! I'm calling 9-1-1. They have medicine in the ambulance.

## Role Play 2: At Work

### Actor 1

Hey, is anything wrong? You don't look well.

### Actor 2

I haven't felt right all morning. I feel sick to my stomach and light-headed, and my chest and breathing feel tight.

### Actor 1

I heard those are signs of a possible heart attack. You should get checked right away at the hospital. I'll call 9-1-1.



## Fast Action Saves Lives: Role Plays (continued)

### Actor 2

No, it's probably just from eating a big lunch. Anyway, I don't want to make a scene and get everybody worried. I'll just wait and see if the pain goes away. Plus, I have to get my grandson from daycare today.

### Actor 1

We want you to be safe! If it's a heart attack, fast treatment can stop the heart attack and prevent serious damage to your heart! I'm calling 9-1-1.

## Role Play 3: At Night

You're at home one night watching TV when you suddenly start to feel very sick. You call your neighbor.

### Actor 1

Hey, I have a bad pain in the center of my chest, and I'm short of breath, and cold and sweaty! Will you drive me to the hospital?

### Actor 2

Those are symptoms of a possible heart attack! Let's call 9-1-1, so you'll get treatment right away.

### Actor 1

I don't want to wake up the neighborhood with the siren and all the lights. It's easier to drive.

### Actor 2

But the ambulance crew can treat you right away and even save your life if you get worse fast. Plus, the ER doctors will probably see you more quickly if you arrive by ambulance.

### Actor 1

Okay, you're right. Please call 9-1-1 and then come over to be with me.



# My Emergency Card

FOLD 2

<b>My Emergency Card</b>		<b>Do you have any of the following conditions?</b>											
<p><b>Emergency Numbers</b></p> <p>Family Doctor: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Local Clinic/Hospital: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Fire Department: _____</p> <p>Local Police Department: _____</p>	<p><b>List current medications, known allergies, and any other information</b></p> <p>Current Medications: _____</p> <p>Known Allergies: _____</p> <p>Other Information: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>												
<p><b>My Emergency Card</b></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Date of Birth: _____ Home Phone: _____</p> <p>Local Clinic/Hospital: _____</p> <p>Emergency Contacts:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Name</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Relationship</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Phone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Name	Relationship	Phone										<p>Heart Disease: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Previous Heart Attack: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>High blood pressure: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>High blood cholesterol: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Diabetes: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Other: _____</p>
Name	Relationship	Phone											

FRONT

FOLD 1

BACK

Cut along dotted lines. Fold card in half and paste with a glue stick. (FOLD 1)  
 Fold in half again to make your own personal wallet card (FOLD 2)